

TranPlan 21 | 2007 Telephone Survey



Volume I Statewide Public Involvement Survey

State of Montana
Department of Transportation

Bureau of Business & Economic Research
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2007, Montanans are:

- Generally satisfied with the state's transportation.
- Satisfied with the physical condition of system components.
- Somewhat satisfied with the availability of most transportation services (except intercity bus service, taxi service, and passenger rail service).

Montanans want more facilities, equipment, or services for:

- City streets.
- Major highways other than interstates.
- Rest areas.

Montanans viewed nearly all problems studied as small problems. Three problems were viewed as moderately severe: road pavement condition, traffic congestion, and timely resolution of safety issues.

Montanans' highest priorities for possible actions to improve the transportation system are:

- Maintain road pavement condition.
- Promote use of existing rail service.
- Keep the public informed about transportation issues.
- Improve the pavement condition of other highways.
- Improve transportation safety.

Trends:

- Overall system satisfaction is unchanged since 1994.
- Satisfaction with the physical condition of system components stayed the same relative to the 2005 study.

- Perceived system problems continue to be rated as small or medium problems.
- Possible system improvements remain rated as medium priorities.
- MDT average performance and customer service grades remained constant since 2005.

MDT's overall customer service and performance grades are in the B- to C+ range.

The public rates the following as the most important security priorities of Montana's transportation system:

- Emergency response plans.
- Border crossings.
- Airports.
- Communication/coordination with other agencies.

Montanans view radio and television as the most useful general communication tools.

Montanans say maps are the most helpful communication tool for transportation planning and project information.

Indications that bear watching:

- Promoting use of local transit systems continues to increase as a system improvement priority.
- Satisfaction with intercity bus service and taxi service continues to decline.
- District 1 continues to view traffic congestion as a growing problem.
- Preserving existing passenger rail service continues to climb in priority ranking of possible actions to improve the transportation system. It is now first in priority rank.

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the 2007 TranPlan 21 Public Involvement Survey is to examine Montanans'

- Perceptions of the current condition of the transportation system.
- Views about possible actions that could improve the transportation system in Montana.
- Opinions about the quality of service the Montana Department of Transportation provides to its customers.

The telephone survey is one of several Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) public involvement processes. It is designed to help MDT policy makers and planners examine the efficiency, capacity, and flexibility of Montana's transportation system to meet current needs and future demands. The survey explores trends in public perceptions by maintaining comparability with the 1994, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, and 2005 TranPlan 21 telephone surveys.

Survey Design

The 2007 TranPlan 21 Public Involvement Survey is the seventh iteration of a repeated, cross-sectional analysis designed to provide both a snapshot of current public opinion and trend analysis. This survey was administered by telephone using a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) process. Sampling was conducted using a Random-Digit Dial (RDD) process. The population sampled was all adult Montanans who live in a household with a working telephone. This population should not be confused with all Montanans since it excludes households without working telephones, the institutional population, and Montanans absent from the state

during the survey period. The approximate sampling error for this survey is plus or minus 3.1 percent. This means that using this study design, in 95 of 100 samples, a sampled mean would be within 3.1 percent of the population mean. In addition to the main sample, adult residents of northeastern Montana (MDT District 4) were oversampled to ensure that at least 100 completions with District 4 residents were obtained.

Survey Administration

The survey was administered from June 4, 2007, through August 9, 2007. Of the 1,714 eligible respondents contacted, 1,011 (59 percent) participated in the survey. A 59 percent completion rate is considered typical for a survey of this type.¹

Respondents were selected randomly within households. The person answering the telephone had the same probability of being selected as any adult member of the household. If the selected member of the household was not home, an appointment was made to interview the absent respondent. Sampled individuals who were out of state during the administration period and individuals with medical problems that precluded participation were ineligible. Telephone numbers drawn by the RDD process were ineligible if they were out-of-service, fax machines, or businesses. Numbers for which there was no answer were called repeatedly during morning, evening, and weekend hours. Those numbers that still did not answer were ineligible.

¹ 1 Groves, Robert, M. et. al. 2004. *Survey Methodology*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. pp. 184-187.

The Respondents

The table below describes the respondents and provides benchmarks against which they may be compared. Nearly half (51.8 percent) of respondents are female, and nearly half (48.2 percent) are male. The percentage of females and males in this sample is within the sampling margin of error of the 2000 Census.²

Table A 2007 TranPlan 21 Public Involvement Survey Respondents by Gender & Race (%)		
	2007	2000 MT Census
Male	48.2	49.3
Female	51.8	50.7
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	5.1	7.4
White	94.2	92.2
Other Race	0.7	0.9
Mean Age	53.9	46.5

Distribution of the sample among races also approximates Census Bureau estimates.³ American Indians or Alaskan Natives comprise 5.1 percent of respondents, while 94.2 percent are White. Asian or Pacific Islanders, Blacks, and Hispanics each comprise less than 1 percent of respondents. Note that due to the change in the way the race question is asked in the 2000 U.S. Census, reports of race distribution may no longer add up to

² Gender estimates U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Montana Table DP-1.

³ Race estimates U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Montana Table DP-1, Race alone or in combination with other races. Note that U.S. OMB race definition changed in 2000.

100 percent and are not strictly comparable to estimates made before 2000.

The mean age of 2007 respondents is 53.9 years, while the average age of Montanans age 18 and over in 2000 was 46.5.⁴ The difference in mean ages is statistically significant. It is likely that older people are easier to reach on the telephone. The respondents to the 2007 survey are probably older than the mean over-17 population of Montana. The probable effect of this difference on the data is small.

Table B 2007 TranPlan 21 Public Involvement Survey Respondents by MDT District		
District	Percent	Respondents
District 1	26.2	266
District 2	17.3	175
District 3	22.6	228
District 4	16.0	162
District 5	17.8	180

The table above shows that 26.2 percent of respondents live in MDT District 1 (Lincoln, Flathead, Sanders, Mineral, Missoula, Ravalli, Granite, Powell, and Lake Counties), 17.3 percent live in District 2 (Beaverhead, Madison, Deer Lodge, Silver Bow, Jefferson, Broadwater, Meagher, Gallatin, and Park Counties), 22.6 percent live in District 3 (Glacier, Pondera, Teton, Lewis and Clark, Cascade, Toole, Chouteau, Liberty, Hill, and Blaine Counties), 16.0 percent live in District 4 (Phillips, Valley, Daniels, Sheridan, Roosevelt, Richland, McCone,

⁴ Age estimate, U.S. Census 2000 Census, Montana Table PCT12, from SF 1 Data.

Garfield, Dawson, Prairie, Rosebud, Fallon, Custer, Powder River, Carter, and Wibaux Counties), and 17.8 percent live in District 5 (Bighorn, Treasure, Stillwater, Sweetgrass, Wheatland, Yellowstone, Golden Valley, Petroleum, Fergus, Musselshell, Judith Basin, and Carbon Counties).

The income distribution for the respondents is listed below. Since the income data were collected in categorical variables, direct comparison with Census Bureau data is not practical. However, based on observation of the 2007 TranPlan 21 Survey income distribution, it would appear that the distribution is higher than the Census Bureau estimate of Montana's median 2006 household income, \$40,569.⁵

Table C 2007 TranPlan 21 Public Involvement Survey Income Distribution	
Category	Percent
< \$20,000	13.7
\$20,000-\$34,999	15.3
\$35,000-\$49,999	19.9
\$50,000-\$74,999	23.5
\$75,000 +	27.7

Structure of This Report

The primary purpose of this report is to describe data collected by the 2007 TranPlan21 Public Involvement Survey. Adequate description of these data

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. Median household income the past 12 months (in 2006 inflation-adjusted dollars) by tenure - universe: occupied housing units. Data set: 2005 American Community Survey, Table B25119.

requires presenting an extensive set of tables throughout the report. Analyses of the data are also presented. The report examines three areas: first, Montanans' attitudes about the state's transportation system; second, opinions about the customer service provided by the Montana Department of Transportation; third, trends in Montanans' attitudes about the transportation system.

A map of MDT districts is located in Appendix A, found at the end of this report. Volume II contains the remaining appendices. The text of the 2007 TranPlan21 Public Involvement Survey may be found in Appendix B (Volume II). Tables of responses to each question are also found in Appendix B (Volume II) and can serve as a useful, quick-reference tool. Appendix C includes the responses to open-ended questions.

To determine differences between group means and percentages, t-tests were calculated and are reported throughout this document. T-test results reported here will use the .05 significance level unless stated otherwise. If a value is said to differ from a second value at the .05 level, in 95 out of 100 samples the value will be found to differ from the second value. When comparing group means for this report, a Bonferroni-adjusted t-test was used. The reason for using an adjusted t-test is that when one makes many comparisons involving the same means, the probability increases that one or more comparisons will turn out to be statistically significant, even when the population means are equal.⁶ For instance, if one compares mean satisfaction scores from five income groups using an unadjusted test, the probability that at least one mean will be

⁶ Norusis, Marija: Guide to Data Analysis. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995, p. 291.

found significantly different is almost one in three, even if the population means are not different.

II. ATTITUDES ABOUT MONTANA'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Overall Satisfaction

Montana's overall transportation system was ranked on a scale of one to ten, where one was "very unsatisfied" and ten was "very satisfied." The mean response was 6.34, reflecting moderate satisfaction with the overall transportation system. The psychological midpoint of the one to ten scale is five. The distance above five is a measure of the intensity of satisfaction.

Satisfaction With the Condition of System Components

Each component of Montana's transportation system was also rated using the same one to ten scale. These ratings are reported in Table 1.

Table 1 Satisfaction With Condition of System Components				
	Mean	95% Confidence		# of
		Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Resp.
Airports	7.81	7.69	7.93	799
Interstate Hwys.	7.39	7.29	7.50	980
Bicycle Pathways	6.44	6.23	6.65	630
Rest Areas	6.42	6.27	6.58	913
Other Major Hwys.	6.32	6.20	6.44	974
Ped. Walkways	6.27	6.11	6.44	824
City Streets	5.06	4.93	5.20	996
Bus Depots	5.06	4.83	5.29	423
Overall System	6.34	6.22	6.45	992

Airports ranked highest in terms of satisfaction (7.81). People also expressed relatively strong satisfaction with interstate highways (7.39). Behind interstate highways is a group of four components with which Montanans are moderately satisfied: bicycle pathways (6.44), rest areas (6.42), other major highways (6.32), and pedestrian walkways (6.27).

Respondents expressed a lower level of satisfaction with city streets (5.06) and bus depots (5.06). The city street and bus depot rankings are statistically indistinguishable from 5.0, the psychological midpoint. A relatively large number of respondents said they did not have enough information about bus depots.

Respondent satisfaction can also be examined by region within Montana. Table 2 presents mean satisfaction scores for each of the five MDT districts.

Table 2 Satisfaction With Condition of System Components by MDT District					
	District				
	1	2	3	4	5
Airports	7.71	7.96	7.61	7.68	8.05
Interstate Highways	7.25	7.55	7.24	7.53	7.58
Bicycle Pathways	6.65	6.33	5.85	6.55	6.77
Rest Areas	6.46	6.17	6.35	7.08	6.43
Other Major Highways	6.27	6.63	6.16	6.37	6.25
Pedestrian Walkways	6.36	6.21	6.21	6.63	6.12
City Streets	5.28	4.92	4.86	5.34	4.96
Bus Depots	5.50	5.17	4.58	5.08	4.82
Overall System	6.20	6.50	6.39	6.46	6.31

Tests were calculated to assess the statistical significance of differences between the means presented. Overall, there is general agreement between respondents from the various MDT regions.

Perceived Need for More Facilities, Equipment, or Services

Montanans were asked whether each of the eight transportation system components needed additional facilities, equipment, or services. Respondents' perceptions about the need for more infrastructure are examined below.

Consistent with their satisfaction ratings, over half of Montanans (56.3 percent) feel additional airport facilities are not needed.

Approximately 66.8 percent of Montanans believe that more facilities, equipment, or services are needed for city streets, and 59.1 percent said the same thing for other major highways. A smaller majority

advocate more infrastructure for rest areas (55.8 percent). About half of the respondents had a perceived need for pedestrian walkways (50.6 percent), interstate highways (47.4 percent), and bicycle pathways (43.2 percent).

Almost half of the respondents say they didn't feel qualified to answer questions about bus depot infrastructure (45.0 percent).

A few regional differences are found when looking across MDT districts (see below). More residents of Districts 3 and 5 say they need more city streets than do District 4 residents. A larger percentage of District 2 and 3 respondents cite a need for more pedestrian walkways than did District 4 respondents. Finally, a higher fraction of people in District 3 say they need more airport facilities than do people in Districts 1 or 5.

Table 3
Perceived Need for Additional Facilities, Equipment, or Services (%)

	Yes	No	Don't Know	# of Resp.
City streets	66.8	29.3	4.0	1009
Other major highways	59.1	33.8	7.1	1009
Rest areas	55.8	33.4	10.8	1011
Pedestrian walkways	50.6	33.0	16.4	1011
Interstate highways	47.4	45.1	7.4	1011
Bicycle pathways	43.2	29.8	26.9	1011
Bus depots	34.5	20.5	45.0	1009
Airports	23.1	56.3	20.6	1011

Table 4
Perceived Need for Additional Facilities, Equipment, or Services in Each MDT District (%)

	District				
	1	2	3	4	5
City streets	62.4	67.0	71.5	55.6	72.9
Other major highways	58.3	60.5	60.3	58.1	58.2
Rest areas	54.3	54.2	61.9	45.4	57.7
Pedestrian walkways	47.2	56.0	55.3	40.7	50.2
Interstate highways	47.2	49.5	50.4	44.9	43.9
Bicycle pathways	40.8	42.6	43.5	38.4	49.1
Bus depots	32.4	35.0	33.9	30.3	39.8
Airports	19.8	25.8	29.2	25.1	19.1

Satisfaction With Service Availability

Respondents stated they were moderately satisfied with the availability of air transportation to destinations outside Montana (6.30), transit for the elderly or disabled (5.94), freight rail (5.90), air transportation to destinations within Montana (5.61), and the availability of local bus or van service (5.36).

Montanans are dissatisfied with the availability of intercity bus service (4.69), taxi service (4.47), and passenger rail service (4.41).

District 4 expressed significant dissatisfaction with the availability of local bus or van service, intercity bus service, and taxi service.

Districts 1, 2, and 5 expressed dissatisfaction with the availability of passenger rail service. Two of the districts with Amtrak service (3 and 4) reported somewhat positive levels of satisfaction.

Table 5
Satisfaction With Service Availability

	Mean	95% Confidence Lower Limit Upper Limit		# of Resp.
Air transportation outside Montana	6.30	6.14	6.46	858
Transit for elderly/disabled	5.94	5.75	6.13	688
Freight rail	5.90	5.67	6.13	467
Air transportation within Montana	5.61	5.44	5.79	712
Local bus or van	5.36	5.15	5.57	694
Intercity bus	4.69	4.47	4.91	585
Taxi	4.47	4.26	4.68	596
Passenger rail	4.41	4.19	4.63	644

Table 6
**Satisfaction With Service Availability
by MDT District**

	District				
	1	2	3	4	5
Air transportation outside Montana	6.06	6.58	6.03	6.53	6.61
Transit for elderly/disabled	5.68	6.47	5.85	6.39	5.73
Freight rail	5.92	5.91	6.34	5.96	5.36
Air transportation within Montana	5.56	5.70	5.52	6.07	5.52
Local bus or van	5.27	5.40	5.20	4.58	5.91
Intercity bus	4.55	5.08	4.65	3.99	4.89
Taxi	4.23	4.48	4.79	3.63	4.80
Passenger rail	4.44	3.68	5.50	5.49	3.19

Perceived Problems With Montana's Transportation System

Montanans rated possible problems on a scale from one to four, where one is "not a problem" and four is a "serious problem." Montanans classified only three of the eleven problems studied (road pavement condition, traffic congestion, and timely resolution to safety issues) as meriting moderate concern, with a mean score of 2.5 or above. This reinforces the positive overall level of satisfaction with the transportation system expressed by Montanans.

The three greatest perceived problems, in terms of their mean scores, are road pavement condition, traffic congestion, and timely resolution to safety issues.

While only three significant problems emerge when examining statewide data, the conclusions are quite different at the district level. Table 8 explores the percentage of respondents in each district who say an item is a moderate or serious problem. For many of the perceived problems, the greatest differences were between respondents in District 1, containing populous western Montana, and District 4, very rural eastern Montana.

Table 7
Perceived Problems With Montana's Transportation System

	Serious problem	Moderate problem	Small problem	Not a problem	Don't Know	Mean	# of Resp.
Road pavement condition	21.2	45.8	17.4	15.0	0.5	2.74	1011
Traffic congestion	20.2	36.2	17.9	24.3	1.3	2.53	1011
Timely resolution to safety issues	14.4	35.4	17.6	20.5	12.1	2.50	1010
Number and condition of rest areas	14.3	32.7	18.2	26.1	8.7	2.39	1010
Impacts on the environment from the transportation system	11.9	36.3	22.7	24.3	4.7	2.38	1010
Vehicle carbon monoxide emissions	15.6	28.7	22.9	26.8	6.0	2.35	1011
Number of vehicles with only one occupant	16.6	26.3	17.6	33.2	6.3	2.28	1010
Debris on roadways	9.0	32.5	33.3	24.4	0.8	2.26	1011
Vehicle damage from highway construction and maintenance	9.2	30.5	29.6	26.7	4.1	2.23	1011
Lack of alternative routes for major roads	8.8	30.3	19.2	37.0	4.7	2.11	1011
The ability to manage specific emergency situations like train derailments, bridge failures, or major accidents	7.7	25.3	21.8	32.6	12.7	2.09	1010
Too many access points (including driveways) onto major roads	8.4	24.9	22.1	40.2	4.4	2.02	1011
Air quality impacts from highway maintenance (i.e., excessive dust caused by winter sanding materials)	5.6	25.8	26.2	37.7	4.7	1.99	1010
Adequate road signs	3.6	18.2	23.3	53.5	1.4	1.72	1011

Respondent views on traffic congestion and vehicle emissions were emblematic of Montana's current regional differences. Traffic congestion is by far the greatest perceived problem in the more densely populated western Montana District 1. Vehicle emissions are also rated as a relatively serious possible issue in District 1. In contrast, relatively few residents of the more rural District 4 agree with the District 1 residents.

About seven in ten respondents from District 1 say traffic congestion is a moderate or serious problem. This percentage is significantly larger than that found in any other district. Almost three in five District 2

residents and roughly half of District 5 respondents also say traffic congestion is a moderate or serious problem.

While about half of District 4 respondents cite road pavement condition as a moderate or serious problem, seven in ten of their neighbors from Districts 1, 3, and 5 say it is a moderate or serious problem.

Districts 1 and 3 had the highest number of respondents claiming there are too many driveways and approaches onto major highways. District 1 clearly had a higher percentage of respondents who considered the impact of road maintenance on air quality as a moderate or serious problem.

Table 8					
Perceived Moderate or Serious Problems With Montana's Transportation System (%)					
	District				
	1	2	3	4	5
Road pavement condition*	70.2	59.2	71.2	51.6	70.7
Traffic congestion*	72.1	57.8	46.1	22.8	53.7
Timely resolution to safety issues*	57.0	47.3	47.9	46.1	43.9
Number and condition of rest areas	46.4	41.4	55.0	40.1	47.7
Impacts on the environment from the transportation system*	53.1	48.1	43.0	31.6	52.4
Vehicle carbon monoxide emissions*	51.2	42.0	42.4	28.3	43.6
Number of vehicles with only one occupant*	48.0	42.4	42.4	26.4	42.2
Debris on roadways*	44.5	38.5	47.1	28.1	39.1
Vehicle damage from highway construction and maintenance*	44.6	40.7	41.8	37.3	29.4
Lack of alternative routes for major roads*	47.3	32.0	38.3	30.0	36.9
The ability to manage specific emergency situations like train derailments, bridge failures, or major accidents	38.3	28.1	32.0	26.5	32.4
Too many access points (including driveways) onto major roads*	39.5	24.4	41.8	20.7	28.1
Air quality impacts from highway maintenance (i.e., excessive dust caused by winter sanding materials)*	41.2	27.5	27.4	19.1	28.1
Adequate road signs	26.6	16.3	25.4	15.0	18.5

* Difference between two or more districts significant at the .05 level.

Possible Actions to Improve the Transportation System

Respondents were asked to prioritize 17 possible actions to improve Montana's transportation system (see Table 9).

Respondents were given five priority categories ranging from "very low priority" to "very high priority." A value of one was assigned to the very low category, two to somewhat low priority, and so forth. As with the perceived problem items, very few respondents said they "didn't know"; most felt qualified to prioritize the options presented. While Montanans view most transportation system problems as small,

they believe solving those problems should take on a medium or somewhat high priority. Montanans classified, on average, all of the 17 possible action items as medium or somewhat high priorities.

Although there was not a clear breakpoint, five actions received top priority scores and were statistically tied for first place with mean scores of 3.65 or higher: maintaining road pavement condition, preserving existing passenger rail service, keeping the public informed about transportation issues, improving transportation safety, and improving the physical condition of other roads and streets.

Table 9
Priority of Possible Actions to Improve Transportation System (%)

	Very High Priority	Somewhat High Priority	Medium Priority	Somewhat Low Priority	Very Low Priority	Don't Know	Mean	# of Resp.
Maintain road pavement condition	29.9	30.9	27.9	7.1	3.0	1.3	3.79	1009
Preserve existing passenger rail service	30.4	26.5	20.8	7.8	4.9	9.6	3.77	1009
Keep the public informed about transportation issues	26.9	31.6	28.2	8.0	3.2	2.1	3.73	1008
Improving transportation safety	27.5	29.7	27.5	9.3	3.2	2.9	3.71	1009
Improving the physical condition of other roads and streets	21.4	33.5	33.3	7.2	2.6	2.0	3.65	1009
Promoting use of local transit systems	21.1	27.1	26.9	12.6	5.6	6.6	3.49	1009
Using new technologies like electronic message signs, etc.	21.6	26.5	29.4	9.4	8.1	5.0	3.46	1009
Ensuring adequate pedestrian facilities	22.9	24.6	26.6	15.3	8.2	2.4	3.40	1009
Increase scheduled airline service	16.0	24.2	29.1	12.3	7.3	11.2	3.33	1008
Improve rest areas	18.9	22.5	31.1	15.6	6.9	5.0	3.33	1009
Improving the physical condition of interstates and major highways	9.7	24.7	40.2	16.6	6.0	2.8	3.16	1009
Reducing traffic congestion by increasing highway system capacity	14.5	24.7	28.8	16.0	11.7	4.3	3.15	1008
Improve physical condition of bus depots	11.9	14.8	21.7	11.3	8.5	31.8	3.15	1009
Reducing the air quality impacts of roadway use	16.5	19.0	29.8	16.7	12.6	5.4	3.11	1008
Ensuring adequate bicycle facilities	18.2	16.2	27.7	17.2	15.2	5.5	3.05	1008
Regulating the number of highway approaches and driveways	10.4	18.5	32.9	19.6	11.8	6.8	2.96	1009
Attempt to reduce single-occupant vehicle use	10.0	15.0	23.5	16.2	31.2	4.1	2.55	1008

Five actions were found in the next tier of possible improvement. Their scores ranged from 3.49 for promoting use of local transit systems to 3.33 for increasing scheduled airline service and improving rest areas.

Three items were grouped slightly higher than the medium score of 3.0, and three items were grouped right around the medium score of 3.0. These three included regulating the number of highway approaches and driveways (2.96), adequate bicycle facilities (3.05) and

reducing the air quality impacts of roadway use (3.11), respectively.

Reducing single-occupant vehicle use (2.55) was rated by respondents as the lowest priority.

Priorities for possible actions to improve the transportation system were also examined across each of the five MDT regions. The percentage of respondents in each district who said an action was a somewhat or very high priority (the top two categories) is presented in Table 10.

Table 10 Percent in Each MDT District Say Possible Actions to Improve Transportation System a Somewhat or Very High Priority					
	District				
	1	2	3	4	5
Maintain road pavement condition	57.5	59.5	69.1	55.2	60.9
Preserve existing passenger rail service	59.6	57.5	58.1	55.7	51.2
Keep the public informed about transportation issues*	52.7	63.1	65.5	50.4	59.6
Improving transportation safety*	59.5	50.7	66.8	46.5	53.7
Improving the physical condition of other roads and streets*	49.3	52.0	62.7	54.3	58.9
Promoting use of local transit systems	50.9	53.2	49.0	38.4	42.2
Using new technologies like electronic message signs, etc.*	40.0	55.8	54.5	43.7	49.4
Ensuring adequate pedestrian facilities*	49.0	47.6	56.2	28.4	44.0
Increase scheduled airline service*	37.8	40.9	49.9	23.1	40.0
Improve rest areas*	38.1	38.7	55.1	36.0	37.4
Improving the physical condition of interstates and major highways*	27.4	30.1	47.5	38.9	34.3
Reducing traffic congestion by increasing highway system capacity*	48.9	30.8	37.7	24.3	38.6
Improve physical condition of bus depots	24.5	26.9	32.1	20.1	26.8
Reducing the air quality impacts of roadway use*	37.7	37.4	38.9	19.3	33.3
Ensuring adequate bicycle facilities*	39.3	35.2	34.2	21.7	30.7
Regulating the number of highway approaches and driveways	32.1	26.9	30.7	17.3	28.3
Attempt to reduce single-occupant vehicle use*	32.0	25.1	25.6	8.5	19.8

* Difference between two or more districts significant at the .05 level.

Since, on average, respondents classified almost all of the studied actions as medium priorities, the differences between districts largely focus on the relative magnitude of response.

There is general agreement among all of the MDT districts about the two highest priority actions (see Table 10). There is also general unanimity about the priority of promoting the use of local transit systems.

Residents of District 3 exhibit the most intense desire for adopting actions that may improve the transportation system. In 9 of the 17 items studied, District 3 residents have the highest proportion of residents who say that the item is a somewhat high or very high priority. The four top priority actions for District 3 are the highest priority ratings among any of the items studied. These possible actions

are maintain road pavement condition, improve transportation safety, keep the public informed about transportation issues, and improve the physical condition of other roads and streets.

Contrasting populations and levels of transportation system congestion are evident when comparing the more populous District 1 with the less populous District 4. While almost half of District 1 residents (48.9 percent) say reducing traffic congestion by increasing highway system capacity is a somewhat or very high priority, only a quarter (24.3 percent) of District 4 respondents agree. Almost one-third of District 1 respondents (32.0 percent) say it is a somewhat or very high priority to reduce single-occupant vehicle use, but only 8.5 percent of District 4 respondents concur with this assertion.

III. TRENDS IN MONTANA'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The 2007 TranPlan21 Public Involvement Survey was designed to provide analysis of the trends in Montanan's attitudes and perceptions about their transportation system. To the extent possible, the wording of the questions was repeated exactly so that responses from the 2007 survey can be compared to those from previous years. There were, however, several question changes in 2003. In these cases, a non-parametric statistic (mean rank) that can be used to compare questions with different metrics is provided.

The 2007 survey findings are compared in the following sections to the surveys conducted in 1994, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, and 2005. Several questions were added in 1997, 2003, 2005, and 2007; thus, in some cases, comparisons can only be made for the later years.

As explained in Chapter I of this report, comparisons here are made using t-tests and other statistical tests. Items are reported only if the differences are significant at the .05 level. The values reported in the Figures 1 to 3 were rounded and some of the values were deleted in the interest of clarity.

Satisfaction With the Transportation System

In each of the seven replications of this study, respondents were asked identical questions to rate their satisfaction with the

physical condition of various system components. The questions utilized a one-to-ten scale, where one is very unsatisfied and ten is very satisfied. The surveys also asked respondents whether or not more facilities, equipment, or services are needed for certain system components.

As shown in Figure 1, when asked to rate their overall satisfaction with Montana's transportation system in 2007, respondents' attitudes were unchanged (6.34) from 1994 (6.20), 1997 (6.28), 1999 (6.30), 2001 (6.26), 2003 (6.27), or 2005 (6.37).

Relative to 2005, satisfaction with the physical condition of system components stayed the same in 2007. Of the eight items studied, satisfaction showed no significant change in all eight items.

Similar to their ratings of the physical condition of system components, Montanans rate their satisfaction with availability of transportation services in 2007 the same as 2005 respondents. None of the eight services studied in 2007 were rated higher or lower than in 2005.

Looking over the past decade, satisfaction has improved in bicycle pathways since 1997, as has satisfaction with the physical condition of non-interstate highways and satisfaction with pedestrian walkways.

Satisfaction has declined over the past decade for out-of-state air service and taxi service.

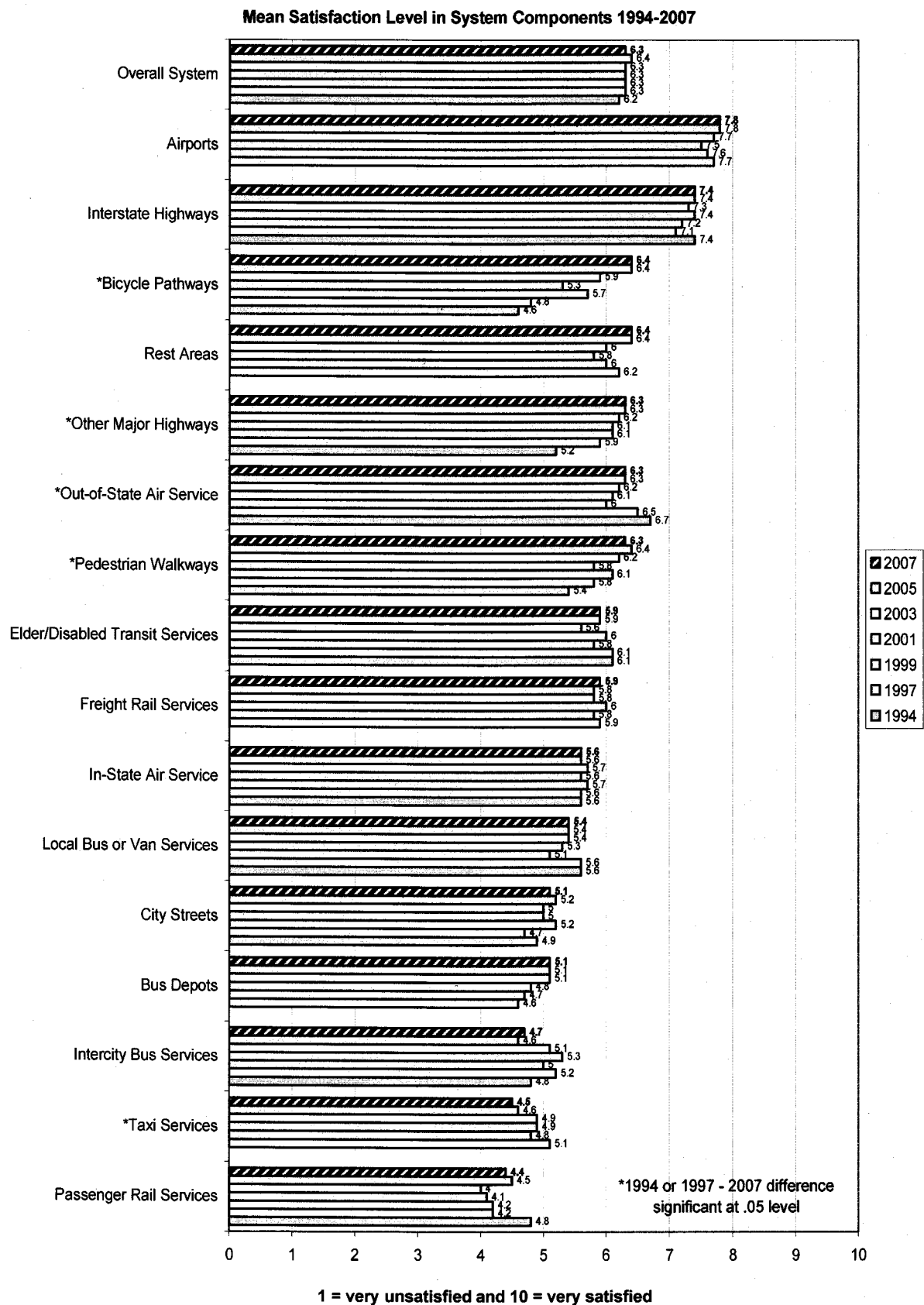


Figure 1

**Perceived Need for More Facilities,
Equipment, or Services**

In 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, and 2007, respondents were asked whether they perceived a need for certain other additional facilities, equipment, or services. These responses are presented in Figure 2.

The 2007 findings remained unchanged in a statistical sense over those found in 2005 ending a decline in the perceived need for more facilities, equipment, or services that started in 2003.

Two-thirds of Montanans (66.8 percent) cited a need for improved city streets in 2007, making 2007 the sixth iteration of this bi-annual survey to find improved city streets as the largest perceived infrastructure improvement need.

Less than one-quarter (23.1 percent) of Montanans say more facilities, equipment, or services are needed for airports. This also represents the sixth consecutive survey to find airports as the smallest perceived infrastructure need.

**Trends in Perceived Need for More Facilities, Equipment, or Services
1997-2007 (% Yes Responses)**

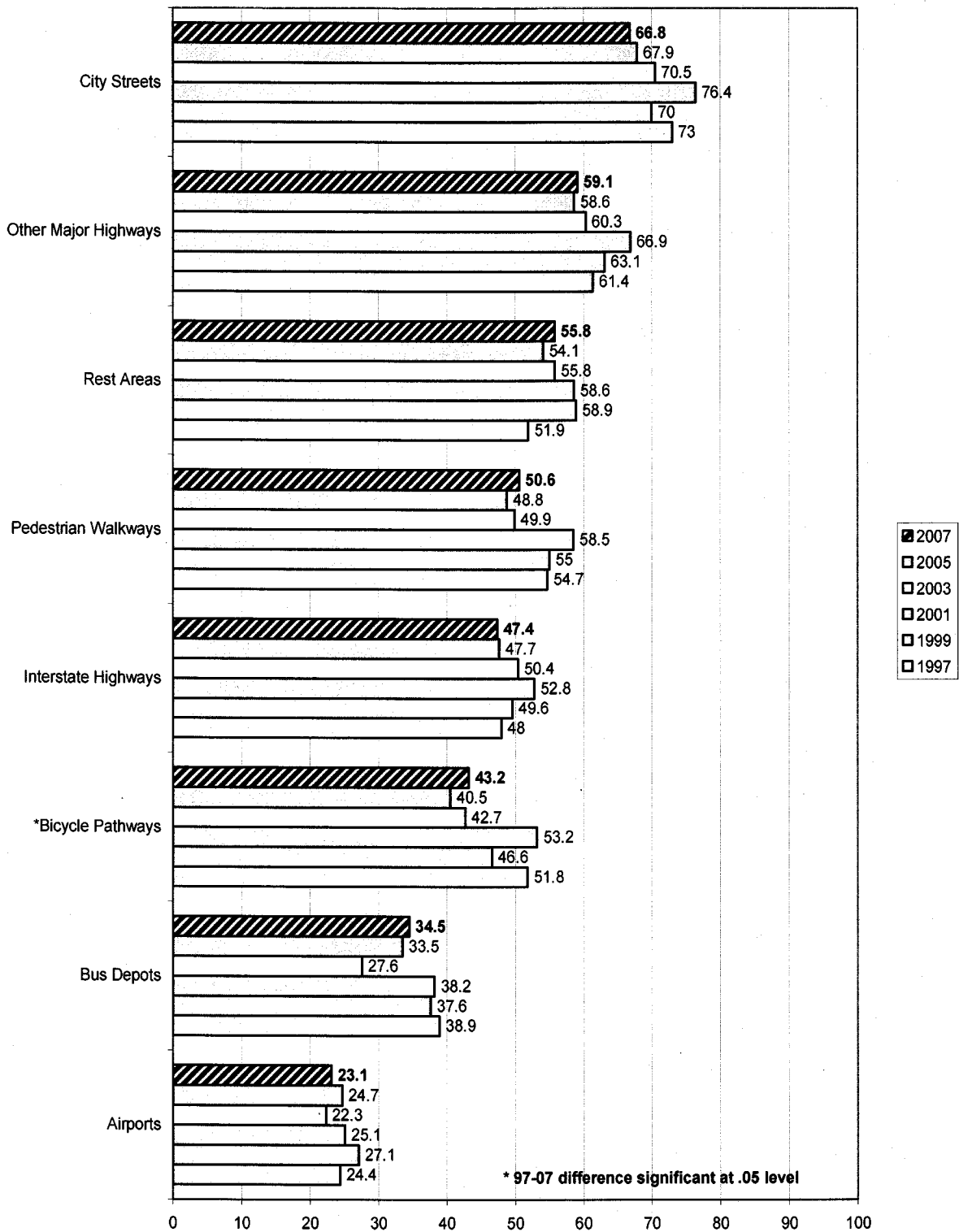


Figure 2

Possible Actions to Improve the Transportation System

The TranPlan 21 questions concerning the priority of improvements in the transportation system and roadways were changed in 2003. A precise five-part scale was substituted for a four-part scale. Unfortunately, this change in scale invalidates comparisons of the 2005 and 2007 surveys with those conducted earlier than 2003.

In an attempt to provide some information concerning trends, Figure 3 presents the mean rank for each of the items from the 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, and 2007 surveys. The mean rank is a non-parametric statistic that ranks each item from 1 (highest rank) to 15 (lowest rank) for each of the six surveys. This statistic is unaffected by the change in wording.

Over the last decade, the largest change in the rank of priority scores has been associated with preserving existing passenger rail service. This item has increased its ranking from eighth in 1997 to first today. Four other items made relatively large changes in ranking from 1997 to 2007: promoting use of local transit systems increased in priority ranking from ninth to fifth, promoting an

increase in scheduled airline service increased in priority ranking from twelfth to eighth, improving the condition of interstates and other major highways dropped in priority ranking from fifth to ninth, and reducing traffic congestion by increasing highway system capacity dropped in priority ranking from seventh to eleventh.

Since the newly adopted questions of 2003 were replicated in 2005 and 2007, absolute differences can be calculated between 2003 and 2007. Four-year trends are reported where the change was consistent over the four years and was statistically significant at the .05 level. The mean priority score for reducing single-occupant vehicles increased in 2007 to 2.55 from 2.12 in 2003. Similarly, the mean priority score for reducing vehicle emissions in 2005 increased to 3.05 from 2.71. Finally, the mean priority score of promoting local transit systems increased from 3.22 in 2003 to 3.49 in 2007.

MDT added two items in 2007: The first, maintaining road pavement condition, scored 3.79 and would have ranked first this year. The second, using new technologies like electronic message signs, scored 3.46 and would have ranked fifth.

Trends in Perceived System Improvement Priorities 1997-2007 Mean Rank

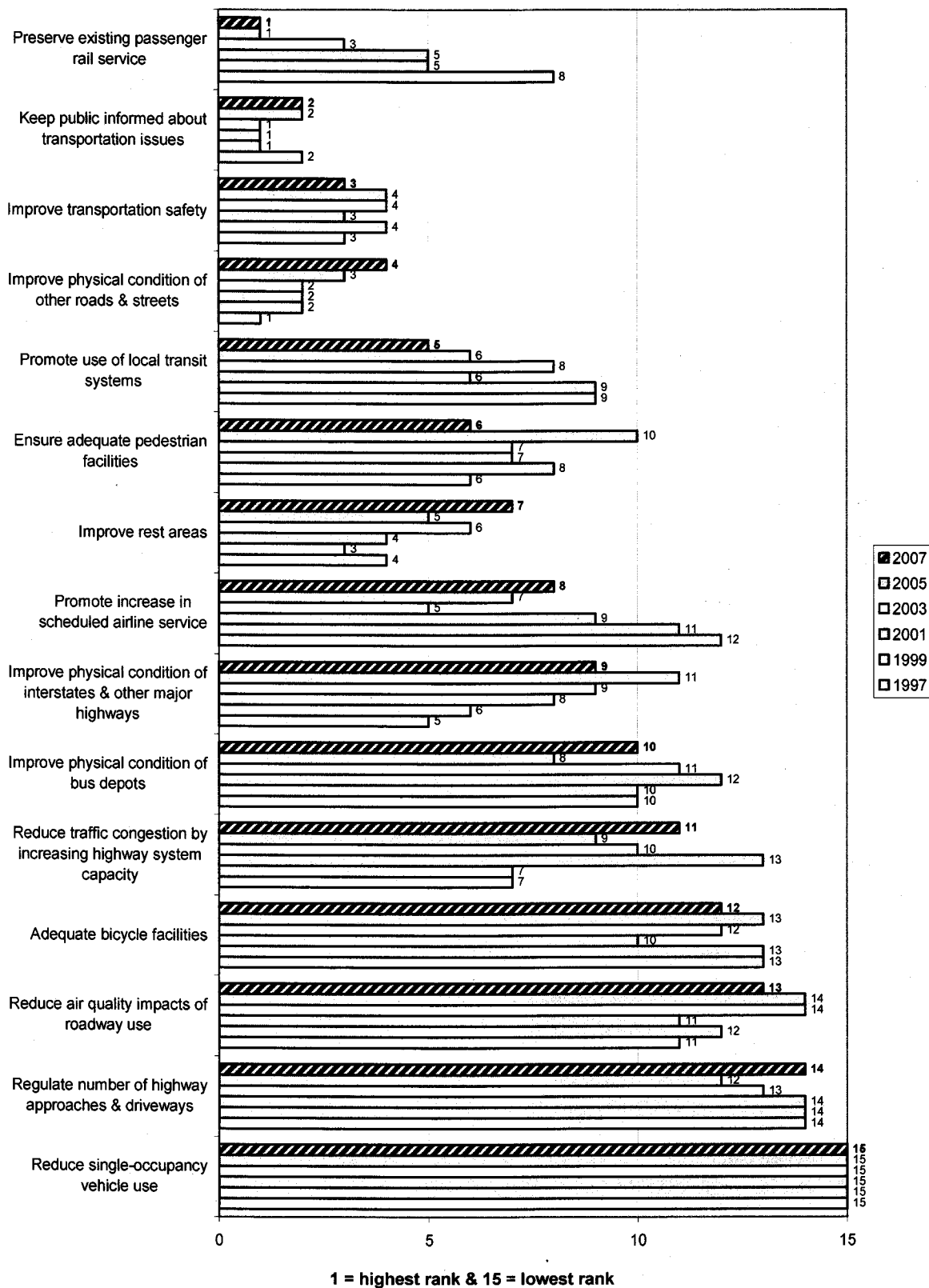


Figure 3

IV. SECURITY PRIORITIES OF TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM COMPONENTS

In 2007 questions related to homeland security were added due to requirements of SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users). Therefore, there are no comparisons for previous years.

Respondents were asked to rate the relative importance of various system components to the security of the overall transportation system. Ratings were chosen from a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 equals not at all important and 5 equals extremely important. Overall, responses ranged from somewhat important to very important (see Table 11 below).

Four elements of the transportation system were rated greater than or equal to very important for the security of the system: emergency response plans (4.19), border crossings (4.12), airports (4.11), and communication/ coordination with other agencies (4.03). The lowest rated aspect of the system was availability of alternative routes (3.39), which still exceeded a somewhat important rating.

At the district level, Districts 2 and 5 were more likely to cite emergency response plans as very important or extremely important than was District 4. Similarly, District 2 residents more often said communication with the public with advanced technologies is very or extremely important than did District 4 residents.

Table 11
Security Priority of Transportation System Components (%)

	Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important	Don't Know	Mean	Total
Emergency response plans	33.8	51.9	9.9	0.9	1.3	2.3	4.19	993
Border crossings	37.5	39.7	13.8	1.8	3.0	4.2	4.12	995
Airports	34.6	44.3	13.6	1.6	2.3	3.5	4.11	995
Communication and coordination with other agencies	26.5	49.1	17.8	1.1	1.3	4.2	4.03	993
Communication with the public using available advanced technologies	23.4	45.9	23.4	2.6	1.8	2.9	3.89	993
Interstate highways	23.9	34.3	28.1	5.9	4.1	3.7	3.71	996
Connectivity of roadways	12.6	39.9	34.9	3.7	2.2	6.7	3.61	993
Other major highways	14.2	33.9	36.0	6.5	4.8	4.5	3.49	996
Public transit facilities like bus terminals	15.6	32.0	34.3	8.3	4.6	5.2	3.48	995
Availability of alternative routes	11.4	30.3	40.6	8.1	3.9	5.6	3.39	995

Table 12 Security Priority of Transportation System Components, Percent Rated Very Important or Extremely Important by District					
	District				
	1	2	3	4	5
Emergency response plans*	83.5	89.9	86.9	74.2	88.4
Border crossings	76.1	75.6	79.0	71.8	80.4
Airports	76.6	75.9	80.6	75.2	85.2
Communication and coordination with other agencies	77.4	76.1	72.8	66.5	78.7
Communication with the public using available advanced technologies*	69.4	77.3	67.1	58.4	68.1
Interstate highways	53.0	59.7	61.7	62.3	59.9
Connectivity of roadways	51.9	55.2	57.6	42.2	49.9
Other major highways	45.6	48.5	52.7	49.6	46.8
Public transit facilities like bus terminals	51.0	47.9	46.4	44.6	44.6
Availability of alternative routes	46.8	35.5	41.2	31.6	43.8

* Difference between two or more districts significant at .05 level

V. USEFULNESS OF COMMUNICATION TOOLS

In order to meet the requirements of SAFETEA-LU, MDT added questions in 2007 asking Montana residents to rate the usefulness of selected public communication tools used by the department. Residents rated each tool on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 equaled not at all useful and 5 equaled extremely useful. Of the seven tools examined, people rated one – radio and television – as very useful (see Table 13 below). In fact, 61.7 percent of respondents rated radio and

television as either very useful or extremely useful.

The remaining tools were rated from just greater than to just under somewhat useful. Respondents found special mailings, including brochures, newsletters, and postcards the least useful. Only 14.3 percent of persons said special mailings are very useful or extremely useful.

When examined at the MDT district level, residents from different locations within the state generally agreed on their usefulness ratings for each communication tool (see Table 14 below).

Table 13
Usefulness of General MDT Communication Tools (%)

	Extremely useful	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not very useful	Not at all useful	Don't know	Mean	# of Resp.
Radio and television	14.2	47.5	27.6	4.3	4.3	2.1	3.64	993
Toll-free call in number	15.6	25.6	27.5	14.2	14.1	2.9	3.15	993
Newspapers	7.6	28.7	41.3	11.0	9.1	2.4	3.15	992
Web site	9.6	25.6	27.5	10.5	21.8	5.0	2.90	993
Surveys	3.4	13.2	45.6	18.0	14.6	5.1	2.71	993
Public meetings in your community	4.5	17.6	37.1	19.3	18.3	3.2	2.70	991
Special mailings (brochures, newsletters, postcards, etc)	2.2	12.1	41.5	21.7	20.2	2.3	2.53	992

Table 14
Usefulness of MDT Communication Tools, Percent Rated Extremely Useful or Very Useful

	District				
	1	2	3	4	5
Radio and television	59.0	57.9	66.8	63.0	63.9
Toll-free call in number	40.9	39.8	45.8	34.0	41.2
Newspapers	38.1	37.9	39.7	30.0	31.2
Web site	34.2	35.7	37.4	31.4	35.4
Surveys	17.6	15.0	20.5	18.3	12.2
Public meetings in your community	19.8	21.6	23.9	22.1	24.3
Special mailings (brochures, newsletters, postcards, etc)	15.7	11.2	15.6	12.6	14.1

VI. COMMUNICATION TOOLS FOR PLANNING & PROJECTS

Respondents also rated tools used specifically by MDT for communicating with the public about planning or upcoming projects. They rated each tool on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is not at all helpful and 5 is extremely helpful. Montanans said maps are very helpful to them in the planning process, while they rated the remaining set of communication tools examined as somewhat helpful (see Table 15 below).

Over half of Montanans (53.1 percent) said that maps are very helpful or extremely helpful to them in the planning process or in learning about MDT projects. Over one-third (36.4 percent) said that pictures or graphics are very helpful or extremely helpful to them. Only 18.1 percent find newsletters very helpful or extremely helpful.

Residents of the five MDT districts largely agree on their ratings of the planning or project communication tools studied (see Table 16 below).

Table 15
Helpfulness of MDT Communication Tools
in the Planning Process or for Project Information (%)

	Extremely helpful	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not very helpful	Not at all helpful	Don't know	Mean	# of Resp.
Maps	12.1	41.0	32.8	5.7	5.8	2.6	3.49	994
Pictures or graphics	6.8	29.6	41.1	9.5	9.0	4.0	3.16	994
Brochures	3.1	15.5	46.1	17.4	14.6	3.4	2.74	994
Advanced technology tools	7.0	20.1	28.8	13.6	22.5	8.0	2.74	993
Web site	6.8	22.1	28.2	12.0	25.7	5.2	2.71	993
Newsletters	3.3	14.8	40.6	20.9	16.5	3.9	2.66	994

Table 16
MDT Communication Tools in the Planning Process or for Project Information,
Percent Rated Extremely or Very Helpful by District

	District				
	1	2	3	4	5
Maps	52.1	58.0	56.6	53.0	46.6
Pictures or graphics	34.6	35.4	44.5	33.4	33.0
Brochures	17.0	15.2	22.8	17.4	20.2
Advanced technology tools	27.3	24.4	28.2	26.3	28.7
Web site	30.3	25.7	30.5	33.9	26.3
Newsletters	17.5	13.5	23.3	17.7	18.2

VII. ACTIONS TO IMPROVE ROADWAYS

For the third time in this series of cross-sectional surveys, respondents were asked to prioritize seven possible actions to improve Montana's roadways (see Table 17). Respondents were given five choices of priority categories from "very low priority" to "very high priority." As with the perceived problem items, a very large majority of respondents felt qualified to prioritize the action items presented.

The top three improvements, as measured by the mean score, were more guardrails, increased shoulder widths to accommodate motorists, and increased shoulder widths to accommodate bicyclists. The remaining five improvements had intermediate mean scores.

There are few differences between the MDT districts in terms of the possible

actions to improve roadways (see Table 18).

District 3 residents were more likely than residents of Districts 1 or 2 to say more guardrails are a somewhat or very high priority. District 3 respondents were also more likely than District 5 respondents to claim that wider roadways are a priority.

In 2007, three items changed in mean priority score from their 2005 level: More guardrails increased to 3.72 in 2007 from 3.49 in 2005. Wider roadways decreased in 2007 to 3.29 from 3.74 in 2005. Increasing shoulder widths to accommodate bicyclists also decreased from 3.71 in 2005 to 3.57 in 2007.

It may be that adding the item "increasing shoulder widths to accommodate motorists," which scored 3.72, better differentiated respondents' priorities with regard to actions to widen specific parts of roadways.

Table 17
Priority of Possible Actions to Improve Roadways (%)

	Very High Priority	Somewhat High Priority	Medium Priority	Somewhat Low Priority	Very Low Priority	Don't know	Mean	# of Resp.
More guardrails	31.6	30.2	21.4	9.2	6.3	1.3	3.72	1005
Increase shoulder widths to accommodate motorists	27.5	32.8	24.9	8.6	4.3	1.9	3.72	1009
Increase shoulder widths to accommodate bicyclists	28.8	27.0	21.5	11.5	8.7	2.4	3.57	1009
Wider roadways	19.1	25.6	27.0	16.6	9.4	2.5	3.29	1009
More traffic lights and left-turn lanes	17.5	27.1	29.3	13.8	10.0	2.3	3.29	1009
More pavement markings	18.9	22.1	29.5	18.0	10.0	1.5	3.22	1009
More lighting of roadways	14.1	21.3	27.8	19.5	13.9	3.4	3.02	1011
More directional/informational signs	11.2	19.1	34.3	20.6	13.7	1.0	2.94	1009

Table 18 Percent in Each MDT District Say Possible Actions to Improve Roadways a Somewhat or Very High Priority					
	District				
	1	2	3	4	5
More guardrails	58.3	53.3	71.9	67.5	62.8
Increase shoulder widths to accommodate motorists	59.6	53.0	63.5	61.3	64.5
Increase shoulder widths to accommodate bicyclists	57.7	52.1	58.4	45.4	57.6
Wider roadways	46.9	40.0	53.2	40.8	38.1
More traffic lights and left-turn lanes	41.8	40.5	50.9	35.0	50.1
More pavement markings	42.6	35.8	46.6	34.8	39.8
More lighting of roadways	39.1	31.0	40.0	31.3	30.1
More directional/ informational signs	27.7	28.3	37.9	26.5	30.3

VIII. OVERALL MDT CUSTOMER SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE

The 2007 TranPlan 21 Public Involvement Survey asks a number of questions that examine public opinion regarding overall MDT performance and responsiveness to the public. The responses to those questions are summarized in this section.

Respondents were asked to grade various aspects of MDT overall performance and customer service. The responses to these questions are found in Table 19. In general, Montanans give MDT an average or slightly above-average (C+ or B-) grade for customer service and performance.

Montanans gave the highest grade to the MDT services compared with five years ago category (2.92 on a four-point scale). Second place went to current MDT quality of service (2.78). Third place was a statistical tie between six categories: MDT overall performance in the last year (2.68), overall highway and maintenance repair (2.60), the quality of MDT planning to meet statewide transportation needs (2.58),

MDT keeping the public informed about relevant information and upcoming decisions related to the transportation system (2.53), MDT's public notification process about construction (2.52), and convenience of travel through construction zones and maintenance projects (2.51). The lowest grades were given to convenience of travel through construction zones and maintenance projects (2.51) and MDT's responsiveness to customer ideas and concerns (2.31).

Respondent grades of MDT's overall performance and customer service by MDT district are presented in Table 20. For the most part, there is widespread agreement between the MDT Districts regarding MDT's overall performance and customer service grades.

District 1 residents gave MDT lower grades than other districts in four of the five areas where significant differences between districts were observed (see Table 20 below). Each of these items may be construction related and thus may be due to construction in the U.S. Highway 93 corridor.

Table 19
MDT Overall Performance and Customer Service Grades (%)

	A	B	C	D	F	Don't know	Mean	# of Resp.
Current quality of MDT service compared with five years ago	16.7	45.6	16.8	2.5	0.4	18.1	2.92	991
Current quality of MDT service	12.1	53.1	25.4	2.0	0.9	6.4	2.78	993
MDT's overall performance during the past year	8.4	52.3	30.9	2.1	1.2	5.0	2.68	991
Overall highway maintenance and repair	10.9	46.2	32.3	7.3	1.0	2.2	2.60	986
Quality of MDT planning to meet statewide transportation needs	9.7	42.4	31.8	5.9	1.6	8.6	2.58	989
MDT keeping customers fully informed	9.3	40.0	33.2	7.5	1.5	8.6	2.53	988
MDT's public notification process about construction	15.6	33.8	32.9	9.7	2.9	5.1	2.52	984
Convenience of travel through construction zones and maintenance projects	12.3	40.7	32.0	8.5	3.7	2.7	2.51	985
MDT responsiveness to customer ideas and concerns	6.5	24.9	31.4	8.5	3.2	25.6	2.31	987

There were no significant changes in the mean grade given to MDT by respondents in 2007 when compared with 2005.

Table 20 Average MDT Overall Performance and Customer Service Grades in Each MDT District					
	District				
	1	2	3	4	5
Current quality of MDT service compared with five years ago	2.88	3.02	2.88	3.03	2.90
Current quality of MDT service*	2.71	2.95	2.72	2.84	2.79
MDT's overall performance during the past year	2.58	2.77	2.69	2.71	2.73
Overall highway maintenance and repair*	2.42	2.79	2.61	2.80	2.63
Quality of MDT planning to meet statewide transportation needs	2.55	2.65	2.60	2.51	2.57
MDT keeping customers fully informed	2.41	2.56	2.60	2.59	2.58
MDT's public notification process about construction*	2.40	2.52	2.69	2.52	2.53
Convenience of travel through construction zones and maintenance projects*	2.35	2.61	2.54	2.57	2.62
MDT responsiveness to customer ideas and concerns*	2.34	2.20	2.16	2.42	2.49

*Difference between two or more districts significant at the .05 level

IX. OTHER ISSUES THAT MDT SHOULD ADDRESS

Respondents were asked what other transportation issues should be addressed by MDT in an open-ended question format. The responses provided by at least five Montanans are listed in Table 21.

These responses should be viewed as a rough measure of the intensity of people's feelings about these issues. It should be noted that about half of all respondents chose not to respond to this open-ended question. This is not uncommon. Open-ended questions generally place more burden on respondents than do questions with specific response options.

Improving or increasing passenger rail service was the most commonly cited issue, followed by improving passenger air service.

Of the responses given by 10 or more people in 2007, three also received ten or more comments in 2005. These were:

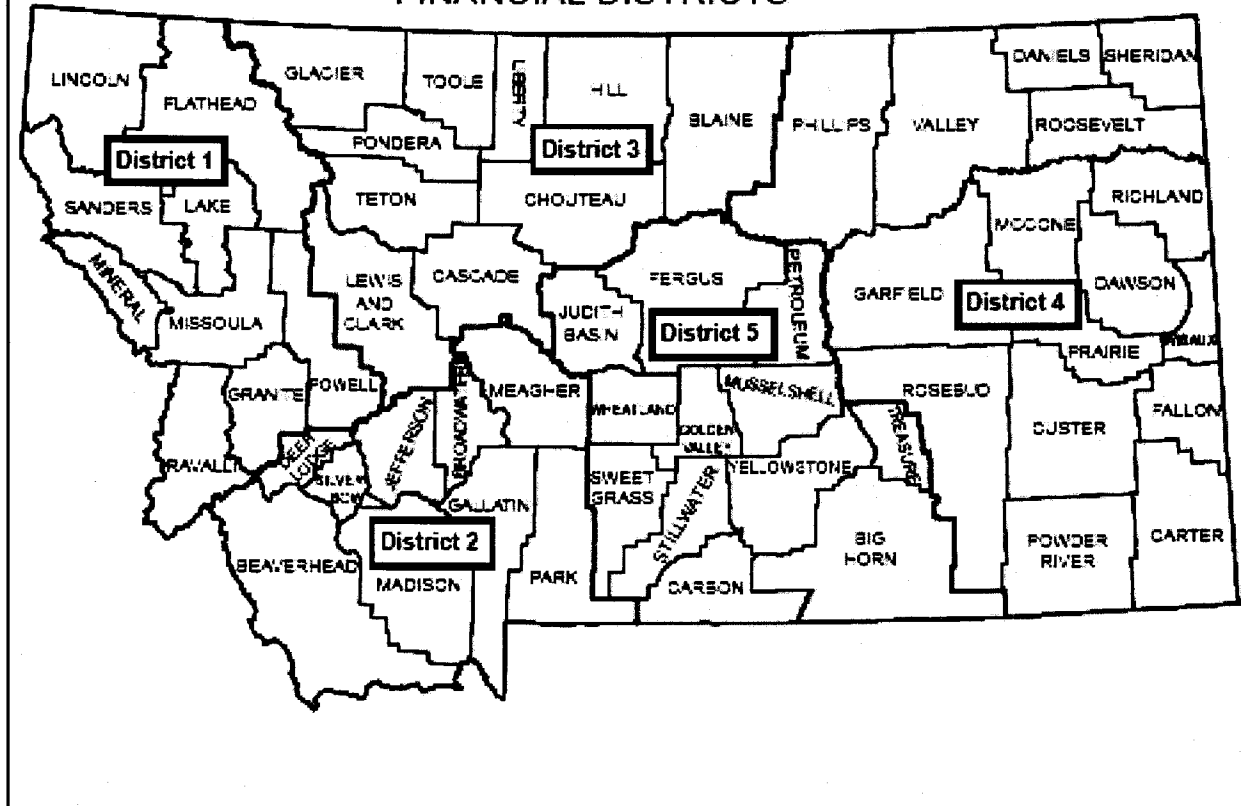
1. Provide more passenger rail service.
2. Lower speed limits.
3. Increase mass/public transit.

Increasing or improving passenger airline service was notable for its prominent appearance in 2007's open-ended responses. It was not as frequently mentioned in past years. A complete list of these responses may be found in Appendix C.

Table 21
Other Transportation Issues
That MDT Should Address

Response	Total
Improve/increase passenger rail service	34
Improve passenger air service	16
Increase mass/public transit	11
Increase number/quality of rest stops	11
Improve snow plowing/de-icing	10
Widen/improve Highway 2	10
Reduce speeding/speed limits	10
Improve/repair other numbered highways	9
Widen two-lane highways	9
Add public transportation to specific places	8
More/improved road signs	8
Widen/Improve Highway 93	8
Improve transportation for elderly and disabled	7
Increase number of MHP/other law enforcement	7
Reduce drinking and driving	7
Fix potholes	6
Fix roads	6
Improve dirt/back roads	6
Improve/add bike paths	6
Get road construction done faster	6
Encourage alternative fuel vehicles	5
Improve city streets	5
Improve transportation planning for population growth	5
Reduce danger from animals on roads	5
Reduce use of corrosive de-icers	5

APPENDIX A:
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT MAP



Montana Department of Transportation



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